

MetroMesh™ Success Story

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Covering Cricket

The city of Perth, Australia enjoys the game of cricket, the hugely popular worldwide sport, and has for some time. The Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA) was established in 1879 and has been located since then on the same site. Today's modern facility offers seating for 20,000 fans, indoor and outdoor practice areas, and is also used for football, rugby matches, as well as concerts and large commercial shows.

As with most sporting events, matches are covered by the media to help fans stay informed. Attending journalists take pictures and write stories as the game proceeds, and file these with news outlets in other parts of Australia, New Zealand, and as far away as England. Typically, to submit a story reporters have to go to a press room where Internet connections are located. So as not to miss any of the action, this is done during a break. Creating a wireless network would enable reporters to upload content to their editors during the game, bringing news to fans more quickly and allowing reporters to take a break – essential for long cricket matches.



Early in 2007, Cricket Australia, the governing body for the sport in Australia, instructed WACA that a wireless network would need to be in place for visiting media to use before an upcoming international match – in 40 days! The requirements were all-encompassing: WACA needed to install a working network that provided wireless Internet access across the entire playing area. The network must not interfere with radio or television broadcasts. After a single login, users must be able to roam the grounds, with full access to email and the ability to transfer file and pictures. Finally, the network needs to accommodate up to 200 members of the press and media. A tall order, with little time to research and implement.

A quick analysis of available offerings showed this was feasible, but many solutions had serious

shortcomings. Most required substantial installation work, with each node required to connect directly to the wired LAN. In addition, many solutions were harder to manage and use. Often, 11-15 wireless access points were needed to cover the grounds. Some solutions required each authorized user name to be loaded into each node, and users would need to re-login as they moved around the stadium. Finally, many products necessitated an upgrade to the network backbone, requiring the installation of six new managed Layer 2 switches.

Proven products and technologies from Tropos Networks™ were able to overcome these issues and smooth the way to fast deployment and customer satisfaction. Only four Tropos® MetroMesh™ routers are needed to cover the entire grounds, and only one needed to be connected to the wireline LAN. Once delivered to WACA, they were installed and up and running in just a few days. According to Colin James, system administrator for WACA, “The hardware pricing in the other solutions were less expensive than those from Tropos. But the installation costs, time, and operating costs were much higher. They were a logistical nightmare.”



The entire wireless system is based on standards-based 802.11 Wi-Fi. This eliminates the need to install specialized subscriber equipment, dramatically reduces customer support issues, while delivering true broadband speeds – 1-5 megabits per second.

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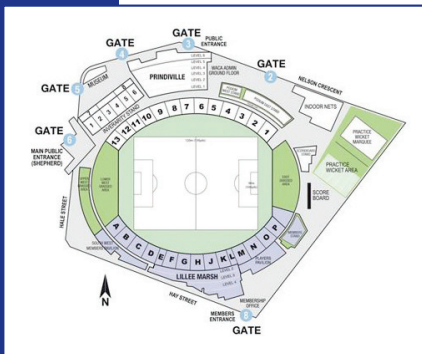
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“With international media covering the matches, we wanted to make a big impression. The Tropos technology worked very well. My boss was very happy.”

Colin James, WACA

The journalists can use their existing laptops to access the system, without specialized cards or adapters.



Administration is much simpler. Tropos software helps keep costs down and service availability way up. Centralized management means that all changes happen from a single location. Authorized user names are loaded just once,

and any change needed is instantly replicated throughout the park. “If someone has a problem, they just call me on my mobile and I can diagnose and fix the problem right away. The problem is resolved and they get immediate access. It usually just takes a minute,” says Mr. James.

Tropos Networks products are built to withstand harsh, outdoor environments. Outside temperatures can reach 45 degrees C in the shade. The purpose-built hardware, self-healing mesh architecture, and efficient set-up and administration provide maximum uptime – important when there is a deadline to meet.

“All the users have commented on the speed and reliability of the network, even under the load. They’re saying it is one of the best wireless networks they have used,” says Mr. James. “From my perspective, the installation and configuration was painless, and management is very simple and effective.”

Now that the system is in place, WACA is exploring how to expand its wireless network usage to other events, and is considering using it for streaming video, fixed cameras, and security purposes. Later, they want to offer Wi-Fi coverage to the general public.

Tropos Networks metro-scale wireless networks are quicker to deploy, less expensive to maintain, easier to expand, and cost less to purchase than other competing wireless technologies. Tropos technology has been deployed in over 500 cities and 30 countries worldwide.

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